

SPRING 2005

The Tribal Update is a quarterly publication of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. It is distributed to leaders of all eight state and federally recognized tribal nations, as well as other interested parties.

Alternative accessible formats of this newsletter will be provided upon request. For further information or additional copies, contact Gayle Shirley, DPHHS Public Information Officer, at 406-444-2596 or gshirley@mt.gov.

This and previous issues are also available at www.dphhs.mt.gov.

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

TRIBAL UPDATE



State Tobacco Use Prevention Program Creates Native American Work Group

The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MTUPP) of the Department of Public Health and Human Services has established a 15-member work group to help it address commercial tobacco use among Native Americans in a culturally appropriate manner.

The next meeting of the group will be April 25 at the Little Shell Tribal Office in Great Falls. All meetings are open to the public.

“Studies have shown high tobacco abuse rates among Native American adults and youth,” said Georgiana Gulden, section supervisor of MTUPP. “And that has translated into high rates of disease and death associated with tobacco use. We think it’s important to address this issue but at the same time acknowledge and respect the sacred uses of tobacco in Indian cultures.”

A prevention needs assessment conducted by the department last year found that 52 percent of 12th grade students attending schools on Montana reservations reported smoking at least one cigarette in the preceding 30 days. This compared to only 28 percent of Montana 12th graders overall. In a survey conducted in 2003, the department found that 36 percent of adult Native Americans living on or near a Montana reservation reported smoking compared to 21 percent of adult Montanans overall.

The Native American Tobacco Work Group will be charged with:

- Collaborating with other agencies that have an interest in tribal health;
- Gathering input from each of the Native American communities (including elders) regarding best and/or promising practices for commercial tobacco use prevention activities;
- Advising MTUPP on public education and awareness campaigns related to tobacco use prevention efforts for Native Americans;

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Tobacco *(continued from page 1)*

- Advising the Native American members of the state Tobacco Prevention Advisory Board; and
- Determining needs, goals, and objectives for tobacco use prevention in Native American populations.

Members of the work group are:

- **Alta Boggs**, North American Indian Alliance, Butte
- **Carlene Gandara**, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Lame Deer
- **Delora Old Elk**, Indian Health Board of Billings
- **Kasey Nicholson**, Fort Belknap Reservation, Harlem
- **Kathy Reddies**, Missoula Indian Center
- **Lisa Whitford**, Rocky Boy Reservation, Rocky Boy
- **Lori New Breast**, Blackfeet Reservation, Browning
- **Lynn Hendrickson**, Salish & Kootenai Reservation, St Ignatius
- **Nicole Toves-Gourneau**, Fort Peck Reservation, Wolf Point
- **Sharon Peregoy**, Crow Reservation, Crow Agency
- **Tina Rusch**, Helena Indian Alliance
- **Toni Jo Atchison**, Little Shell Band of Indians, Great Falls
- **Victoria Augare**, Great Falls Indian Family Clinic

MTUPP plans to appoint additional members to represent Native American youth and elders.

For more information about tobacco use among Native Americans, contact Jason Swant at 406-444-3866 or jswant@mt.gov.

Billings Conference in April to Focus on Brain Injuries, Substance Abuse

A two-day conference to explore the impacts of substance abuse and brain injuries on the Native American population will be held April 26-27 at the Mansfield Health Education Center, 2900 12th Avenue North, in Billings.

The event is sponsored by the Montana Center on Disabilities at MSU-Billings and the Senior and Long Term Care Division of the state Department of Public Health and Human Services.

“All those who attend will be given the opportunity to

experience a wide range of remarkable workshop presentations by some of the country’s leading speakers in the areas of empowerment, substance abuse, and brain injury,” said Ian Elliot of the Montana Center on Disabilities. “Much of the Montana population still does not realize we are second in the nation in per capita incidence of brain injury.”

The conference is funded in part by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. The cost to register is \$65 for individuals, \$75 for professionals, and \$105 for a family of three. A limited number of conference exhibit booths are available for \$105 each, which includes the cost of conference registration.

In addition to the workshops, the registration fee pays for two continental breakfasts, a luncheon, and a family-oriented concert by singer/songwriter Jack Gladstone of the Blackfeet Nation. It also covers attendance at the opening ceremonies, which will feature the Northern Cheyenne Drum Group from Lame Deer.

The conference is especially intended for Indian people with brain injuries and/or substance abuse issues, their family members and associates, tribal leaders, law enforcement personnel, crisis center personnel, educators, and other professional care providers. However, the public is welcome to attend. Continuing education credits are available for clinical social workers, professional counselors, licensed addiction counselors, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and POST council members.

To register or reserve concert tickets, call Jeanie Monahan at the Montana Center on Disabilities, 406-657-2312 or toll-free at 1-888-866-3822. Registration is also possible online at www.msubillings.edu/mcdregister.

Browning IHS Staffer Recognized for Service to Disability Beneficiaries

Cleo Main, an Indian Health Services (IHS) benefits coordinator from Browning, was honored recently by the state Disability Determination Services and the federal Social Security Administration for her dedicated service to DDS and SSA claimants and beneficiaries.

Ms. Main received an award from Michelle Thibodeau, DDS bureau chief, and James Everett, SSA regional

commissioner from Denver. Many members of the Blackfeet Nation attended the ceremony, including William Talks About Jr., chairman of the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, and James St. Goddard, a member of the council.

Ms. Main has since taken another position with the IHS.

Native American Aging Issues to Be Topic of Governor's Aging Conference in May

The 37th annual Governor's Conference on Aging will be held May 17-19 at the Colonial Red Lion Inn in Helena. As in past years, the conference will feature a track aimed specifically at those interested in Native American aging issues.

Speakers for the Native American track and the topics they will address are:

- Reno Charette, Governor's Indian Affairs Coordinator, "Putting a Bug in Your Ear;"
- Ronn Moccasin, soldier, warrior, and veteran issues;
- Lynwood Tall Bull and Cathy Real Bird, Indian healing practices;
- Manny Real Bird, R.N., diabetes; and
- Cecilia Cowie, DPHHS, Native American head injury grant.

To register for the conference or for more information, contact the Governor's Citizens Advocate, 1-800-332-2272, or Brian LaMoure, Senior and Long Term Care Division, 406-444-7782, blamoure@mt.gov.

HHS Starts Native American Initiative

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has announced a Native American Initiative designed to strengthen American Indian populations and tribal governments through donations from the private sector and Fortune 500 firms.

The initiative is a collaboration between the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), an agency at HHS dedicated to improving the social and economic conditions of Native Americans, and Gifts In Kind International, the third largest charity in the United States.

About 44 percent of all Fortune 500 companies and thousands of other businesses partner with Gifts In Kind,

which manages donations to more than 200,000 nonprofit organizations. Products available through the organization include office supplies and equipment, computers, software, health and personal care products, clothing, books, toys, and building materials.

The goals of the initiative are to:

- Increase communication through an information network to provide better service delivery of charitable donations to Native American communities; and
- Encourage development of Native American reservation-based distribution centers to ensure that charitable contributions reach those most in need.

For more information, contact ANA at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ana and go to Native American Initiative, or call toll-free 877-922-9262.

Federal Benefits Workshops Scheduled at Fort Belknap, Fort Peck Reservations

Two workshops focusing on federal benefits that are available to Native Americans will be held in late April on the Fort Belknap and Fort Peck Reservations.

The workshops will provide basic information on a number of federal, state, and tribal programs, including retirement and survivor's benefits and disability insurance available through Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Veteran's Administration benefits, Medicaid, Indian Health Services, and tribal health services.

The Fort Belknap workshop will be April 18 from 1 to 5 p.m. and April 19 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Blue Head Start Building. For more information, contact Judy Thomas, 353-3154, or Mikkie Grant, 673-3777.

The Fort Peck workshop will be from 1 to 5 p.m. April 20 at the Greet the Dawn Auditorium on the Fort Peck Community College campus in Poplar. It will continue from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on April 21. For more information, contact Connie Andvik, 768-3491; Wilfred Bear, 768-3488; or Sabrina Kurokawa, 653-6500.

The workshops are co-sponsored by the Indian Health Services, tribal health departments, tribal vocational rehabilitation programs, and other tribal programs. Similar workshops have been held on the other Montana reservations.

Public Health Summer Institute in June; Stipends Offered to Tribal Health Workers

The fourth annual Montana Public Health Summer Institute will be held June 6-10 on the Montana State University campus in Bozeman.

The event is aimed at public health students and professionals and community partners. It is co-sponsored by the Public Health Training Institute and the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice at the University of Washington.

Courses will cover such topics as essential public health services, program evaluation, environmental health, applied epidemiology, and “leadership in turbulent times.”

The cost to attend for those who register before May 16 is \$150 for one course or \$250 for two. The cost after May 16 is \$190 for one course or \$290 for two. Lodging runs from \$18 a night in a double dormitory room to \$60-\$80 for a motel room.

Stipends are available to help tribal health and Indian Health Services staff with tuition and dormitory expenses. Each jurisdiction is eligible for up to \$250 in tuition reimbursements, as well as free access to a dorm room. The stipend may be split among two individuals. The cost to attend for those receiving stipends is \$40.

For more information, contact Vicki Cook, Public Health and Safety Division, 406-444-0732 or vcCook@mt.gov. To register online, visit: https://www2.montana.edu/confservices/public_health.

Handful of DPHHS Bills Signed into Law

A bill allowing interaction between the Child Support Enforcement Division of DPHHS and tribal IV-D programs was one of the first bills introduced at the request of the department to become law during the 2005 legislative session.

House Bill 80, sponsored by Rep. Margaret Campbell, revises laws relating to the enforcement of child support to clearly acknowledge the participation of tribal nations that have established their own child support agencies under Title IV-D of the federal Social Security Act. The bill does not require any tribe to establish its own child support

system. However, the bill would change the language of the law to ensure that any tribe that does have its own system would clearly be part of the overall system, just like any other state.

A second DPHHS bill that specifically affects Native Americans is on its way to Gov. Brian Schweitzer for his signature. **Senate Bill 86**, sponsored by Sen. Frank Smith, will provide guidance to county attorneys and state district court judges as to the nature of testimony that may be offered by qualified expert witnesses under the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Qualified expert witnesses are called upon to testify to the emotional and physical impact that placement of a child might have, taking into account tribal culture and values.

The bill also allows DPHHS to share confidential information with qualified expert witnesses, and it defines the terms “Indian child,” “Indian tribe,” and “Indian custodian” so that they are consistent with the definitions in the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Other DPHHS bills that have passed the Legislature and have been signed into law as of April 12 are:

HB 127, which amends the legal definition of “seriously developmentally disabled” for the purposes of civil commitment.

HB 183, which allows the department to seek a federal Home and Community-based Services Waiver of the Medicaid state plan to increase flexibility in providing services for seriously emotionally disturbed children.

SB 42, which clarifies and reconciles the duties of the Children’s System of Care Planning Committee and a Service Area Authority Board for the development of policies, plans, and budgets for the delivery of mental health services to children.

SB 60, which allows DPHHS to adopt by administrative rule the number of beds that a critical-access hospital may have, not to exceed the number allowed by federal law. It also eliminates the limit on the number of acute-care inpatient beds that a critical-access hospital may have.

SB 94, which amends the requirements for service of process under laws relating to child abuse and neglect cases.

